

Rep. Louise Slaughter joined with members of the New York High-Speed Rail Coalition to argue that Upstate New York deserves its fair share of federal stimulus dollars allocated to create a national high-speed rail network.

Slaughter was joined by Congressmen Dan Maffei (NY-25) and Mike Arcuri (NY-24), members of the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, State Senator Malcolm Smith and state and local lawmakers at the Syracuse’s William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center to introduce the High-Speed Rail New York Coalition.

“The reason we’re all here today is clear; it’s because we all share the same vision,” said Slaughter. “What we envision is a network that starts by connecting Buffalo to Albany and expands to connect our state to Toronto through Niagara Falls, and Montreal to Albany creating a large economic development center and strengthening our international trade. We see a network that links to Chicago to the west and Boston, Baltimore and Washington to the east. We expect a more mobile workforce, and strengthened economies throughout Upstate NY, a cleaner and faster way to travel, and a way to highlight the wonderful aspects of each of our cities. In short, we expect progress.

“In Congress I’m working to ensure that Upstate New York gets its fair share of federal rail funds and I’ve been working steadily with Transportation Secretary LaHood, the Federal Rail Administration, and the White House on this very issue.”

In August, New York State submitted an application for Track One funding which included 38 shovel-ready rail projects for a total of \$564.8 million. In October New York State submitted a second application for Track Two funding which included rail projects to develop the Empire Corridor High Speed Passenger Rail Program for a total of approximately \$4.7 billion. Approximately \$3.2 billion would be dedicated to the construction of the third track, while the remaining \$1.5 billion would be used for equipment, station and bridge improvements, and other projects.

Through Slaughter’s leadership, the second application was modified to focus on Upstate New York. An announcement on the funding is expected early next year. The federal stimulus

package allocated \$8 billion to jump-start high-speed rail programs across the country.

Slaughter, along with other members of the Upstate NY delegation, secured \$4.95 million in the FY 2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act to improve grade crossing safety and to facilitate high-speed rail along the Empire West Corridor. Slaughter is also pursuing federal money through the Surface Transportation Authorization Act.

Rail has long been a part of New York’s history. For more than 150 years, trains have brought honeymooners to Niagara Falls, wide-eyed tourists to Manhattan and active citizens to their state capital. When adorned with bunting, trains are how our presidents and governors came to meet their constituents. In fact it was by rail that President Lincoln traveled his final journey from Washington to Illinois stopping in almost every major Upstate New York city after his death in 1865. A portion of that very route is the corridor the New York High-Speed Rail Coalition aims to revitalize.

The High-Speed Rail New York Coalition is comprised of federal and state lawmakers, mayors, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations from major metropolitan areas across Upstate New York. It represents over 13,000 businesses that employ in excess of one million Upstate workers.

Slaughter has been a leader in the fight to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York having led meetings with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Congressional leaders, representatives from Governor Paterson’s office, the N.Y. Department of Transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, and CSX.

Click [here](#) for more information on Congresswoman Slaughter’s efforts on high-speed rail.